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IS LOVE EVERYTHING?

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The story tells of Virginia Carter, luxurious daughter of a socially ambitious but financially embarrassed mother, who having chosen between two men, finds on the second anniversary of her marriage to Jordan Southwick, that she is still haunted by memories of Robert Whitney. Only a pack of old letters remain to link her with this past *amour* and resolved that, while she cannot give her husband love, she can give him all her loyalty, decides to destroy these ties that bind her to a dead but not forgotten, love.

Her brother Boyd, a waster, in need of money and failing to wheedle more from her, saw in the letters a club over his indulgent sister, and stole them. Then pressing financial obligations engulfed him and thinking her husband would pay a higher price for his treachery approached him. But Jordan Southwick was made of sterner stuff, neither would he buy or read the letters, but in spite of himself the insidious poison of doubt tainted his thoughts. Upon her he had heaped riches, gowns, social position in exchange for the heart that belonged to another—but did he possess her? Had his wealth purchased all? Could he answer his own question? Did she belong to him? Oh! God! if he only knew!

A fugitive look in his wife's eyes when the two old lovers met again touched anew the spring of doubt and hatched a Machiavellian scheme. He would put her to the test—a long cruise on his yacht—her old lover the guest of honor—moonlit nights as they sped across turquoise seas—would it prove that only the ashes of love remained? He wondered! Why not try it?—then he would know which man she loved. The ship would be a laboratory, he the observer watching these two under the microscope.

—and so the cruise. Days sped on—and nights, star lined paths to Paradise. Lovers' eyes spoke words their lips would not utter. What a fool he had been to challenge destiny! Now he knew that it was Robert she loved, had always loved, would always love. From the crumbling stones of their house of Love he had created a Frankenstein monster that could now turn and destroy him! What a fool he had been!

What a situation! What a crux to a drama! Lovers struggling with the eternal question! A husband struggling with the eternal problem.

Then a crash! the yacht splintered like matchwood! cries for help! shrieks of despair! two lovers clinging to each other in this mad moment that threatened to rob them of life—and tore from them the last vestments of civilization's laws! they loved! life was sweet now they knew it! nothing else mattered! Then came help—they were saved—the sole survivors of the gay and laughing crowd that danced and drank and loved aboard that floating palace—and here they were aboard a lugger, a rum ship bound for the whiskey frontier, strange salvage from Davy Jones's locker. Jordan Southwick's experiment had worked, but not as he had expected. And now they were free, free to love and live as their hearts dictated—fate had stripped them of all save their elemental souls!

But all was not well aboard the vessel. A Woman was a new kind of cargo to the brutal crew that manned its blood stained deck. A prize worth fighting for this woman. Good ships had been scuttled for jewels less rare they knew. Then the battle! Angry seas and maddened hearts flaming with the crimson fires of lust,—a man, Robert whom the sea had given back to her, fighting against odds for the woman he loved. How wonderful was this elemental, primitive love of man for woman—and woman for man. But what of tomorrow? now that dawn had come and with it a cruiser to their rescue. Then home again, could she be sure that Jordan was really lost as reports had it? had she right to give her love to Robert?

Thus they pondered, precious moments meant for love tumbling into the abyss of Time. Yes! she loved him! Always had! always would! Their lips met!—a curtain moved! was drawn aside! a man stood within the portal and gazed upon the denouement of a drama that he had helped to spin from the threads of doubt. How happy they were! They thought Jordan Southwick dead! They had the right to love! Is Love Everything? he wondered. Better that they always think him dead than wreck three lives—the curtain softly fell and outside the shadows of night wrapped Jordan Southwick in their mantle of black, to him sacrifice was Love's true name and the shadows seemed to echo a laugh, a laugh tinged with sadness, that seemed to say "Life and Love—it is Everything and Nothing."

—thus ends the story.

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